

Taylor, Helen B.
Vancouver and other poems

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VANCOUVER AND OTHER POEMS

By
Helen B. Taylor



Mrs J. Mc Gregor
from
Helen B. Taylor

VANCOUVER

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By
Helen B. Taylor
Port Moody, B.C.

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VANCOUVER

AND OTHER POEMS

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BY
HELEN B. TAYLOR



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VANCOUVER

Serene behind her wave-girt shores
She gazes on the westward main,
Or southward where the Fraser sweeps
Beside the fertile Delta plain.

And stately ships all gaily drest
Within her land-locked harbor wait,
To pour their treasures from afar
Within her pier-lined, open gate.

Spices and silks and costly woods,
Copra and pearls from southern seas,
And luscious fruits that put to blush
The apples of Hesperides.

All these they leave and bear away
Lumber and coal and precious grain—
A never failing golden stream
Poured from the prairie's rolling plain.

In Stanley Park the ferns are green,
And deep within the silent wood,
The very soul of peace and rest
Broods in the scented solitude.

The twilight breezes stir the grass,
The willows whisper to the moon
The while they strive to touch her rays
All shimm'ring in the Lost Lagoon.

Steadfast the Lions keep their watch
Afar amid the silent snows—
And Lo! upon yon mountain height
A sudden light appears and glows—

The Chalet lights that twinkle far
Far up upon the snowy crest
As if the mountain caught a star
And pinned it, gem-like, on her breast.

VANCOUVER'S JUBILEE

Time, holding in her ageless hands,
The annals of the passing years,
Points proudly to that distant day—
Now half a century away,
When over silv'ry leagues of steel,
Like ribbon winding from a reel,
The welcome first-through-train appears.

A bud of promise came to bloom
In beauty on that distant morn—
The day that crowned a labor vast,
And bound our great Dominion fast
In bands of steel from sea to sea,
Our heritage from Destiny,
Our trust for children yet unborn.

And now a gracious city reigns
Where ancient pine trees held their state;
And ships that sail the seven seas,
From Norway to the Cyclades,
From Argentine to far Cathay,
Are sailing into English Bay
To enter at the Lions Gate.

The land-locked harbor is a-bloom
With stately liners gayly drest,
With pleasure craft, their white sails furled,
Tramp steamers 'venturing round the world,
And sturdy freighters, new and old
Who keep within each spacious hold
The treasures drawn from east and west.

O mountain-girdled, verdure clothed
Fair city by the western sea!
Dowered with wealth of stream and mine,
With groves of cedar, balsam, pine,
Whose granaries, prairie plensished, pour
In yawning holds their golden store,
Move on to thy great destiny.

THE LIGHT AT POINT ATKINSON

Night, folding down her sable wings,
Broods, starless, over mount and bay;
And to the fading landscape clings
The rising night mist cold and gray.

Afar, the surf with angry roar
All vainly dashes towards the Light
That, steadfast from the rockbound shore,
Sends cheer and warning through the night.

So when the mists of doubt and fear
Cling, dankly, to the shuddering soul,
And wraiths of lost hopes writhe and peer
Where sullen waves of sorrow roll,

Then if we raise our eyes above
The transient, mortal fret and foam,
God's beacon light of changeless love
Through rocky shoalings points us home.

THE LIGHTS OF IOCO

Betwixt the sombre skies above,
And darkling deeps below,
Like jewels all, on velvet pall
Ioco's bright lights glow.

And in the waters deep beneath
Another city gleams,
With fairy light, now dim, now bright
Like faces in our dreams.

On either side the dim, dark hills
Fade back against the sky;
And wraith-like near the silent pier
The boats at anchor lie.

O little cheerful lights shine on,
Illumine the starless night—
A symbol on the hillside drawn
Of Hope's unfailing light.

THE CALL OF THE SEA

The wind is blowing across the bay,
From the tossing, white-capped sea,
And shrill on its salty breath is borne
A stirring message to me.
And a sleeping hunger wakes and cries
In a voice I must obey,
For the wild white horses of the sea
Are a-calling, calling, calling me,
And I must be up and away,
O! I must be up and away.

I would be feeling the dip and sway
Of the deck beneath my feet,
When masts are creaking before the wind
And the bitter, stinging sleet.
And so, farewell to the quiet town
That circles the sunny bay,
For the wild white horses of the sea
Are a-calling, calling, calling me,
So I must be up and away,
O! I must be up and away.

IN CAPILANO (A Nocturne)

You live on the lofty hill top,
And I in the valley deep,
Anear to the little river
Where evening shadows creep.

The night mists over the valley
Are moving up silently,
And borne on their wraith-like pinions
My thoughts ever rise to thee.

You gaze from your lofty mansion
Far down to the ocean shore;
I see but the swaying grasses,
And children about my door.

They hearken with grave attention
Your words in the world of men,
For you are the kingly eagle—
I am but the humble wren.

The past—it is gone forever,
Far out on a shoreless sea;
But yet like a ghost it haunts me—
Would God it were gone from me.

IN THE SIMILKAMEEN

One day I climbed a rocky steep,
O'er flinty stones and brush and bramble,
Where writhing roots of sage were coiled,
The foot unwary to entangle.

Still up o'er sliding shale I pressed—
Time by my thudding heart beats reckoned;
Some secret I was fain to learn
From those grim heights that frowned and beckoned.

At last far up a welcome rock
Bade me to rest, and quite forgetting
The weary climb, with joy I viewed
The valley in its mountain setting.

The blue haze in the far ravines,
The straight green pines that fringed the river,
The clumps of graceful cottonwoods
Whose eager fingers, sunlit, quiver.

Within each orchard's ordered rows
The red or green roofed dwelling-places
From household fires sent spirals blue,
That dimmed and died and left no traces.

Seen from above the valley seemed
A picture fair of use and beauty,
Where fear and discord were unknown,
And life was one with love and duty.

* * * * *

Could we but sometimes rise above
The daily cares, the fears that smother,
And see life, not a tangled web,
Where one thread mars or breaks another,

But as God sees it—(He whose eyes
Behold no evil) all things meet
For Beauty, Order, each small part
Needed to make the web complete.

O'er those far uplands of the soul
The winds of God come softly stealing,
Fair blooms of Hope and Faith abound,
And wisdom's tree drops leaves of healing.

BEYOND THE ROCKIES
(Lines written for a friend)

Across the mighty Rockies and beyond
League after league of fertile, rolling plain,
To that fair city by the inland sea,
My wistful thoughts have turned to thee again.

Fewer and dearer are the friends to whom
We cling as time takes toll of what we were,
Stealing the rose and lily from our cheeks,
And graving on our brows the lines of care.

Youth and its fairy gold has vanished quite,
And life mature, its glory, stress and strain,
Wave shadowy hands in passing as we sit
Beside our gathered mounds of loss and gain.

Let us forget the loss, or seal it fast,
Beyond all sight, within the Place of Tears,
Where, haply, God's own alchemy may turn
Its blackened dross to gold for future years.

Our gains—love, friendship, home, the joys that sprang
Like flowers beside the pathway which we trod,
The faith that grew from reaching trembling hands
To touch the ever outstretched hand of God.

The wisdom we have garnered from the years,
The patience, learned so often from defeat,
The farther vision, and the broader aims,
And kindlier judgment on the weak we meet.

These are our treasures, and the beauty spread
So lavishly before us, flowers and trees,
Majestic mountains, and the limpid lakes,
And sunset's glories o'er the changeeful seas.

Treasures of heart and mind—these cannot die,
But reach through death to grasp eternity.

THE WESTERN LAND

Sing me a song of the western land,
Of the prairie broad and free,
For I dwell today a weary way
From the land where I would be;
And I long for the tang of the wild west wind,
And the scent of the brown, sweet grass,
Where the blue-bells sway the long bright day,
And the wild bees sip and pass.

I know a road where the golden rod,
And sunflowers tall and bold,
Stand gay and bright in the glad sunlight
Like a hedge of living gold;
And the blackbirds whirr o'er the yellow wheat,
And the heart beats full and free,
And it's O for the west, with its hope and zest,
The land where I long to be.

THE RETURN (From West to East)

I said, I will go to my childhood home,
The house on the windy hill,
Through fields of clover once more I will roam,
And find, it may be, in the woodland loam
White violets blooming still.

The river's soft murmuring melody
Will sing in my ears once more;
The trees in the orchard will welcome me,
The mighty willow a shelter will be
As oft in the days of yore.

Alas, for the changes the years unfold,
The river was almost dry,
The trees in the orchard were gnarled and old,
The willow was gone as a tale that's told—
And naught was more changed than I.

THE CATHEDRAL BELLS

(St. Boniface)

There comes a sound as faint as fairy bells,
That ringing welcome to the moonlit dells,
The queen of fairies with her maidens bright,
Who hold their revels in the misty night,
While list'ning elms with sympathetic sound
Sway gently o'er the dew-empearlèd ground,
And murmuring brooks meand'ring to the sea
With low, sweet tones complete the melody.

Thus, to our drowsy ears this Sabbath morn,
Across the silent river there is borne,
(Into our waking dreams to softly creep,
Rousing old sorrows from their restless sleep,
Luring fair fancies from their secret cells)
The chiming of the old Cathedral Bells.

APRIL WINDS ON THE PRAIRIE

O winds of night, that will not let me sleep,
But call to me in tones that are akin
To that faint, vague unrest that oftentimes stirs
The sentient soul in this imperfect world.

What seek ye on the prairie vast and gray
This April night? The winter snows are gone,
Save where in hollows, mingling with the leaves
Of bygone summer, soiled patches lie.

The pallid moon peers furtively from out
The driven, broken cloudbanks, then is gone;
And still, O winds, I hear your mournful tones
Rising to wailing, sinking to a sigh.

Seek ye the scented grasses, or the flowers
That nodded welcome to each vagrant breeze?
Alas! the autumn frost breathed coldly down
Upon their beauty, and they drooped and died.

Summer will come again, and clothe with bloom
(Though never just the same) the waiting earth;
Die down, O winds, and sleep and grieve no more,
But wait, with patience, through the coming days.

MOONLIGHT

Midnight and moonlight, mystic and wonderful,
Driving the sleep from eyelids and drawing me
Here to the window with hushed heart expectant,
Longing to learn of the lore of the night time.
See how the still earth in mantle of whiteness
Seems to be standing in rapt adoration.
Silent as statues the frost shrouded maples,
Sentinels stand on the long street deserted.
Not a twig stirs, not a shadow is shifted,
Save as the moments slip silently sunward.

Glitter and glimmer the stars in the ether,
Rapier points on the dark blue of heaven
Growing a-gray at the misty horizon.
Ah! if our ears were less earth-tuned, and keener,
Could we not hearken the songs that the spheres sing,
Singing and swinging through space in their orbits,
Gladly obeying the Mind that impels them—
Mind that holds all things within its great circle.

No light but moonlight and starlight and snow light,
Save for the pale yellow gleam in yon window,
Where a lone watcher in love and faith wrestles
With the archdemon, fear, even as Jacob
Wrestled all night near the brook at Peniel:
Yon yellow gleam is a blot on the landscape,
One alien spot on its whiteness and brightness,
One jarring note in the moonlight sonata.

Yet O how dear is that faint beaming earth light,
Speaking so clearly of our human kinship,
Needing each other in joy and in sorrow.
Man could not live this life under those cold stars,
Could he not feel the great pulse of the human
Beating in heart-warming friendship beside him.
And the Jehovah seems nearer and dearer
Since through the valleys and groves of Judea,
Friend among friends and a teacher beloved
Walked the White Christ, manifested to mortals.

RECOLLECTIONS

How close the scenes of childhood lie
To swinging gates of memory.
And oft the passing winds of chance
Blow wide the gates and, at a glance,
Outspread before the inner eye
We see the scenes of childhood lie.
E'en now I view with pensive eye
The path I trod in days gone by.
From urban school, adown the hill
To Avon's bank it led until
The quiet river's even flow
Is shadowed by the trees that grow
Within the little grove, and sway—
Mute relics of an ancient day.

Here, just beyond a noisy brook,
There is a little shady nook,
Where violets so hidden lie,
That only loving eyes can spy.
And valley lilies, too, are there
In robes of green, and O, how fair
Their tiny stems of blossoms white—
The fairy bells that ring by night.

Beyond this gate there smiles the plain,
Where golden waves of ripening grain,
Are moved by vagrant winds and swayed,
A yellow sea of light and shade.
How well I know each winding road
That led to childhood's loved abode—
The one that straightway climbed the hill,
And one that followed Avon still.
The river like a gentle maid
Went softly past in sun and shade.
On either bank the trailing grass
Parted aside to let her pass;
And sentinels, in gray and green
Lent added beauty to the scene—
The stately elm, the sturdy beech,
The stalwart maple, each to each,
Murmured in tones that rose and fell—
Windswept, the happy "All is well."

But here the river parts in twain,
To clasp its tender arms again
Around a tiny island green,
Where mosses creep, and young boughs lean
To watch the trailing white clouds pass
Within the river's looking-glass.
And here an ironwood, dwarfed and bent,
Too rashly near the stream has leant,
And there, contorted, bides the years
Among its graceful woodland peers.

But when the frost, with artist hand,
Hath laid new colors o'er the land,
The iron-wood, in crimson drest,
Looks gay defiance at the rest,
For none so bright a gown can boast
Among the jealous woodland host.

Up this gray path that climbs the hill
The placid kine, at even still,
In long procession, pacing slow,
Wind upward in the sunset's glow;
And here upon the hill's green crest
The farmhouse looking to the west.
On either side the orchard trees
Stir gently in the evening breeze.
The plum-tree waveringly lets fall
Her snowy blossoms, past recall,
Wishing, perhaps, in gentle pain,
That flowers and fruit could both remain.

The willow tree that crowned the hill
In summer's heat and winter's chill,
Is gone, alas, and not a trace
Remains to mark the hallowed place,
Where lover's vows were whispered low
In summer nights of long ago,
Where children sported in its shade,
And climbed its mighty limbs and swayed
Far out into the ambient air
In tingling joy that knew no care.

Down through the meadows cool and green
The river winds its way serene,
Now gleaming o'er a sandy ridge,
Now glooming 'neath the cross-road's bridge,
Until at last 'tis lost to view
Beneath those woods of sombre hue,
That hide the sunset's dying glow,
As slow it fades, full loth to go.

Out of the dim, mysterious blue
The evening star swims into view,
And like a jewel on the breast
Of lady twilight lies at rest.
Shine on, O star, so clear and bright
Make beautiful the coming night
With hopes and dreams, whose fruitage lies
Perhaps, 'neath other, distant skies.
Ah, well! some day, in some fair place
We'll meet our lost dreams, face to face,
Perfected, glorified, fulfilled,
Beyond what'er we dreamed or willed.

How close the scenes of childhood lie
To swinging gates of memory.

THE EMPIRE

When shall the star of Britain's might
 Wane and be seen no more,
Lost in an ever-darkening night,
 Reaching from shore to shore,
While the surging waves of the seven seas
 Sigh for the fleets they bore?

When shall her proudly flaunting flag
 Droop and for aye be furled,
And to the dust, a useless rag,
 Down from Time's hand be hurled,
'Mid the faintly whisp'ring faded flags
 Lost in the ancient world?

Never through all the years untold,
 While earth revolves through space,
Shall Britain's star grow faint and cold,
 Falling from out her place,
But shall ever shine with its rays undimmed
 On Britain's sturdy race.

Never shall droop her flag. Its Red
 Speaks brave blood freely given
To keep still White, untarnished,
 Her faith with man and heaven;
And the freedom, typed by its ocean Blue,
 Can ne'er from her be riven.

THEY KISSED THE FLAG

(1914)

When it became known, late at night, that the first British Expeditionary Force had sailed, Belgium men and women in ———— asked the British consul to show them the British flag. When this was done, they filed past until early morn kissing it.—London Daily Telegraph, 1914.

Night and the stars of night, afar in their ancient splendor,
Cold and serene looked down on earth with its passing turmoils.
So have they gazed unmoved while kingdoms crumbled to ruin;
And in the halls of kings, the slinking jackal prowling,
Finds but the drifting sands, and the black bat's ghostly pinions.
Winds from the sunny south are breathing of purpling grape vines
Drooping at drowsy noon anear to the sea's blue gleaming.
Little those vagrant winds that flutter the flags uplifted,
Know of the anxious souls that wake through the long night hours
Dreading the coming day, that is bringing the proud foe nearer.
Restless they walk the streets and whisper with white lips trembling—
"What will the morrow bring and where is our strength to meet it?
Under their iron heels the feet of the Hun-like foemen
Trample our hapless land, and leave but a smoking shambles.
Where shall we look for aid? Will Britain in just wrath rising,
Help us avenge our wrongs, and striking the pow'r-crazed eagle,
Drag from his cruel claws our bleeding and helpless country?
How long! O God, how long! We wait while our hopes grow fainter,
Watching through darkest night for Hope like a star to beacon."

Suddenly came a thrill, and sounds of a mighty cheering,
Wild huzzahing that broke because of the strangled sobbing.
"Britain has put to sea—her thousands of gallant soldiers
Hurry to take their stand beside our sons and our brothers.
Nobly they kept their faith, their honor is not for barter.
Show us the British flag, the flag of our noble ally."
Then from the balcony, the British consul full proudly,
Lowered the silken folds in reach of the hands uplifted.
Many the lips that pressed the flag with its triple crosses,
Many the tears that fall in benison on its colors.
All the long night was heard the sound of succeeding footsteps,
Youth and manhood and age, they came to honor the standard—
Mothers lifting their babes that tiny fingers might touch it.
"This is the flag," they cried, "that drives from our throats the
strangling
Fear, that there is for us, that fate of all fates the saddest,
Crushed by brute force to live a people without a country,
Bowing shamed, sullen brows before the insolent victor.
God, we thank thee that now our daystar of hope is rising."

Pale stars faded and fled before the breeze of the morning.
Gray dawn grew to amber, then glowed to a rose whose glory
Gave to the sentient soul the pain from too great a beauty.
Peace seemed to spread her wings in healing over the people.
Then with uplifted brows, renewed hope lighting their faces,
Quietly home they moved, in patience to wait the future.

CANADA TO BRITAIN
(1914)

"Does Britain realize what the consequence will be of obeying that scrap of paper?"

"Only a scrap of paper," but it bore
The seal of Britain. Therefore it became
A Truth incontrovertible—a sword
Within the hand of Destiny to lance
The swelling ulcer of a king's mad greed.

We, whose forefathers drew their earliest breath
Upon those sea-girt isles, are proud to know
Ourselves a part of that great Empire
Which keeps its faith whate'er the consequence,
Which strives with single heart to foster peace—
If peace may be with honor, failing that,
Whose slowly-rising, righteous wrath breaks bounds,
And like a torrent irresistible
Sweeps o'er the mighty barriers of the foe,
Strewing their wreckage on the shores of time.

We do not weep, tears are such futile things,
And yet there comes an aching in our throats,
A swelling heart, a hurrying of the breath,
When Britain, from her throne upon the seas,
Musters her sons again to right a wrong,
And wash a foul spot clean with willing blood.
Take of our best. Your cause is righteous cause,
And being righteous, calls for sacrifice.
So, when the Lion bares his glittering teeth
The Lion's whelps spring to his mighty side,
And roar responsive thunder. O'er the din
Of raging battle still we hear the voice
Of Drake, of Nelson, of the Iron Duke
Cheering you on to glorious victory.

And then at last when lust of power is slain
And ravening greed which takes no count of life,
Out of the blood-red mire, God grant we pluck
The snow-white flower of Universal Peace.

THE REFUGEE
(1914)

She stands a tragic figure, on the beach,
Gazing with sombre eyes across the sea,
And from her pallid lips, all brokenly,
Her suffering soul finds sad relief in speech.

“They tell me I am safe, that England’s shore
Is holy ground the Oppressor dare not tread;
They speak me comfort, bid me lift my head
To meet the day, when I may feel once more

“Beneath my feet the soil of my dear land—
O woeful land! Wherefore should I return
To ope afresh the wounds that sting and burn?
Or pluck, to torture me, one blackened brand.

“From that dear spot where I was wont to greet
A father, husband, son? There came a day
The Prussian eagle swooped upon his prey—
And all my world lay shattered at my feet.

“My little son—(his hair twined goldenly
About his face)—shrieked with his latest breath:
‘O mother’! And I’ll hear that sound, till death,
To search for him and find him, makes me free.

“Once I went down to hell, to give him life,
And who so proud as I when first he pressed
His downy head against my happy breast—
And then to lose him in a madman’s strife.

“I am not proud now; rather I must go
Quietly all my days with bated breath,
Lest I disturb the sanctity of death—
God! will the warring nations ever know

“That twice ten thousand miles of richest soil
Won by a battle’s godless, insane strife,
Has not the worth of one poor human life?
Stricken and ruined in this mad turmoil.”

A FANCY

When I shall freely flit from star to star—
 (I shall some day)
Mayhap I'll meet some happy wanderers
 Along my way.
And weaving mystic circles we shall roam,
 New scenes to find,
More beauty ever, and more wonders planned
 By Loving Mind.
Out of the glittering star dust, and the dew
 Of stellar space,
We shall erect a vasty hall, instinct
 With power and grace,
Its opalescent pillars will be wreathed
 With flowers bright,
Graceful and fragrant, knowing only life,
 No frost, no blight,
Its floor of woven moonbeams, silv'ry white,
 Its roof the sky,
And happy groups of children there shall pause
 When dancing by.
Then we shall toss fair dreams and high resolves
 Adown to earth;
And some will find a home and burgeon forth
 To timely birth.
Fair thoughts of Peace and Hope and High emprise
 Shall swiftly fly
Through vast infinities that seem so bare
 To human eye;
But yet are vibrant with all glory, drawn
 From color, sound,
And form, too highly keyed for us to know
 On earthly ground.

This dear earth is so lovely, what must be
Those other climes in life's eternity.

THE LAND OF DREAMS

In the land of dreams, in the land of dreams,
Where a tender light is shining
Like the sunlight and the twilight and the moonlight fused in one,
In the still air, perfume haunted,
In a woodland, dim, enchanted,
There my soul throws off all thraldoms, and the weight of tasks
undone,
And 'neath poppy leaves entwining,
All the furrows of repining
From my care-worn brows are driven
In the land of dreams.

In the land of dreams, in the land of dreams,
There my feet scarce bend a flower,
As they glide o'er velvet mosses bright with many a lily bell,
To the iris margined river,
Where the soft grey shadows quiver,
Round the silent sailing shallows wreathed with buds of asphodel,
Or to aramanthine bower
'Neath the shade of hills that tower
O'er a dim lake, blue with lotus,
In the land of dreams.

O thou land of dreams! O thou land of dreams!
Take me back into thy seeming;
I am weary of the clamor, and the discord of the years,
And my soul is fain to wander
Hand in hand with peace o'er yonder,
Where love's wings are never wearied, nor his bright eyes dimmed
with tears;
Where our youth in white robes gleaming,
All life's promises redeeming,
Treads with us a magic pathway
In the land of dreams.
O thou land of dreams!

PEACE

Let us forget the war awhile, and turn
Our wistful thoughts to that so longed for day,
When slaughter ceases on this pain-wracked earth,
And new homes rise where blackened shambles lay.

Full hard it well may be to build a peace,
A righteous peace, to bless all human kind,
And be a never-failing light to reach
Even to eyes that hate or fear might blind.

God send us builders, patient, strong and blest
With vision rapt, to build this light-house high
Above the restless waves of human fear,
Weak faith, and legioned errors born to die.

Its strong enduring base must be the rock
Of equal justice, equal rights for all;
Its corner stones of liberty—but not
That liberty that well might haste its fall.

Had we but always used our liberty
To further every aim that upward tends,
And curbed our license with self-discipline,
Far stronger were we now to reach our ends

Of peace with victory, for the unseen hosts
Of Wisdom Infinite had been our stay,
A cloud to hide us from the foemen's eyes,
A light to shine upon and point the way.

THE DAWN OF PEACE—A HYMN

(Tune: "Regent's Square")

Father, God, the fount of wisdom,
 Whence we draw our little store,
Humbly now we bow before Thee
 For that wisdom to implore,
On us in this hour of peril
 Pentecostal showers pour.

Great Jehovah, many nations
 Turn their anxious thoughts to Thee.
From this night of gloom and horror
 Thou alone cans't set them free.
From all eyes the scales of error
 Cleanse that they may clearly see.

Give us courage ne'er to falter
 As we war that wars may cease,
May Thy wisdom love and justice,
 In the minds of men increase.
Then will come the glorious dawning
 Of a universal peace.

Cleanse our hearts of scorn and hatred,
 As we gird us for the fight.
Judge between us and our brethren
 O Thou power Infinite;
Crush the serpent head of error,
 And give victory to the right.

THE FIRST EASTER

The heavy eastern dew lay chill
On Calvary, on Calvary.
And in that garden near the hill
The gloomy shades of night lay still,
Though in the heavens, blue and deep,
The watching stars had fallen asleep,
And heralds in the greying sky
Proclaimed that day was drawing nigh
To Calvary, to Calvary.

Who cometh through the shadows gray,
O wearily, so wearily?
Before the coming of the day,
In mourning garments disarray,
With lowered eyes where memories sleep
And silent grief that may not weep,
Impelled by love too strong to die,
Lo! Mary Magdalen draws nigh,
O wearily, so wearily.

What brings she to the sepulchre?
For love of Him, for love of Him,
Ere yet the songbirds are astir,
Rare spices, frankincense and myrrh,
And ointment for the pierced head
Laid low upon its cold stone bed.
So through the chill and silent dawn
Her grateful heart impelled her on,
For love of Him, for love of Him.

The east grows rosy and the light
Triumphantly, triumphantly,
Falls on the lilies tall and white,
That sentinelled that wondrous night
Above the rock-hewn tomb where He
Fought death and won the victory,
And that our faith be not in vain,
He rose immortal life to gain.
Triumphantly, triumphantly.

With trembling limbs she draweth near,
The Magdalen, the Magdalen.
So sore a heart can know no fear,
And lo! the Master is not here.
The napkin that had bound His head,
The linen clothes that wrapped the dead
Are lying there but where is He
The Master loved so gratefully
By Magdalen, by Magdalen.

Her loss is more than she can bear,
 O loving heart, O woman heart!
And in her long and golden hair,
She hides the face that still is fair.
The spices rare, the spikenard,
Unheeded fall upon the sward,
And bitter tears that sting and smart
Arise from out her aching heart,
Her loving heart, her woman heart.

“Why weepest thou,” the angel said—
 O miracle! love’s miracle!
“They took away my holy dead,
I know not where they laid His head.”
O eyes so purified that see
The blessed angels, ears so free
From earth’s vain babble they can hear
The angel message full and clear.
 O miracle! love’s miracle!

Again her head she low doth bow,
 O faith look up, thy day hath come.
“Why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?”
And lo! behold the kingly brow
Late crowned with thorns, the outstretched hands,
That broke forever death’s strait bands.
“Rabboni,” Master, it is He
From earth’s mortality set free.
 O faith, look up, thy day has come.

What mean to us the empty tomb,
 The risen Christ this Easter morn?
The web of life in time’s swift loom
Is marred with threads of wrong and gloom.
O risen Master, help us here,
To make thy chosen pattern clear,
And know e’en neath this changing sky
That life and love can never die.
 O risen Christ! O glorious morn.

A PRAYER

Almighty God, whose might is love,
Whose wisdom is a boundless sea,
In grateful adoration bowed
I lift my heart in praise to Thee.

I thank Thee that to know Thy truth
Is to be freed from care and fear.
What phantoms grim can cause affright
When we have proved Thee ever near?

Unseal my faltering lips, that they
May speak of many a blessing given,
Of light that shone around my path
When clouds of doubt and fear were driven.

And as I rise from sense to Soul,
My human will to Thee resigned,
Help me to express Thy watchful love,
So freely poured for all mankind.



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